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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Robert Kirchner of Urbana, who passed away on April 17, 2011; and

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WHEREAS, Robert Kirchner was born on June 23, 1956, in Joliet; his parents were Robert and Margaret (Keyser) Kirchner; he grew up in New Lenox; and

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WHEREAS, Robert Kirchner attended Western Illinois University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy and political science in 1976 and his master's degree in political science in 1977; while attending WIU, he met his future wife, Gerri; they married on August 25, 1979, in Park Ridge; Bob and Gerri began their marriage in Urbana, where he attended the University of Illinois College of Law, and earned his law degree in 1982; and

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WHEREAS, After earning his law degree, Robert Kirchner joined the Champaign law practice of Burt Greaves and Art Lerner, which became Greaves, Lerner and Kirchner, and later, Lerner and Kirchner; in 2002, he opened his own law office in Champaign and was later joined by attorney Ruth Wyman; as a highly skilled trial lawyer, he was an intelligent advocate for his clients and was known for his dedication to the law; he was

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1 diligent in his research and his knowledge of the law was the  
2 foundation of his legal abilities; during his career, he argued  
3 many cases before the appellate courts and the Illinois Supreme  
4 Court, winning several cases that established legal  
5 precedents; he was well known among his peers as a champion of  
6 numerous legal causes that other attorneys would not take on;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Robert Kirchner's interest in the law prompted him  
9 to run as a Democratic candidate for Illinois State  
10 Representative in 1996; despite losing the election, his  
11 campaign engaged public participation by hosting a series of  
12 monthly symposiums on key issues impacting state legislation,  
13 including education funding, crime, drug abuse and gun control,  
14 child welfare, women's rights, health care, employment laws,  
15 and campaign finance reform; and

16 WHEREAS, Robert Kirchner served on the Champaign County  
17 Board as the District 9 representative, appointed in 2001 and  
18 elected in 2002 to a 2-year term; as a member of the board's  
19 Democratic majority, he voted to pass laws to guarantee a  
20 living wage for all full-time county employees, prohibit  
21 employment discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or  
22 sexual orientation, and establish free dental care for  
23 low-income children; he served as chair of the county nursing  
24 home sub-committee and worked on the successful passage of the

1 referendum proposal to fund its construction; he ran for  
2 election to the county board again in 2006, in which he lost a  
3 closely contested Democratic primary; and

4 WHEREAS, Robert Kirchner served as Vice President of the  
5 Champaign County Bar Association from 1994 to 1995; in 1994, he  
6 helped establish Best Interest of Children, a local non-profit  
7 organization dedicated to child and family advocacy, and served  
8 on the organization's board; and

9 WHEREAS, Robert Kirchner is survived by his wife of 32  
10 years, Gerri; his sisters, Marlene (Dennis) Gallagher and  
11 Lorrie (Robert) Chaplin; his brothers, John (Carol) Burkhart,  
12 Ron (Laura) Kirchner, and David Kirchner; his brother-in-law,  
13 Paul (Sue) Geissler; his sister-in-law, Shelly (Paul) Kotecki;  
14 his 4 nephews; and his 7 nieces; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL  
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
17 his family and friends, the passing of Robert Kirchner; and be  
18 it further

19 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
20 presented to the family of Robert Kirchner as an expression of  
21 our sympathy.